DON BLUTH'S TOON TALK

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Barry Manilow Composes First Music Score

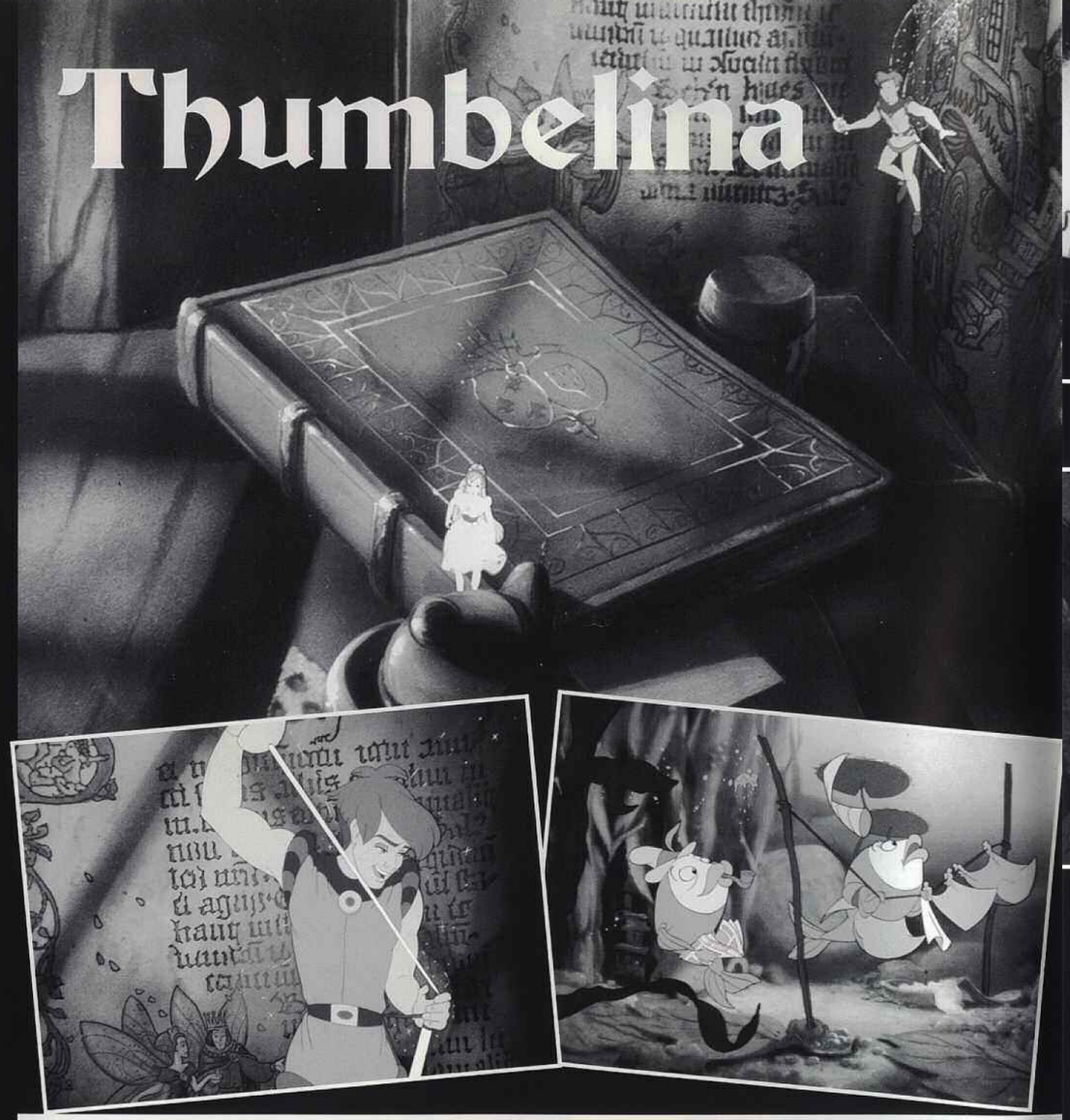
Disney **GIANT,** *Freddy Moore*

Dragon's Lair Episode IX

$5.95

REVIEW

Thumbelina



THE STORY

In 1952, Danny Kaye starred in the role of Hans Christian Andersen in a film by the same name. Always an audience pleaser, Danny Kaye sang and told stories to the children of Copenhagen. To one very small, sad little girl, he sang a snippet of the tale of Thumbelina, capturing in that moment, a priceless expression of joy on the little girl's face. The lyrics went something like this:

> Thumbelina, Thumbelina, tiny little thing, Thumbelina dance, Thumbelina sing.
> Thumbelina, Thumbelina, though you're very small,
> When your heart is full of love, You're nine feet tall.

Upon hearing this, the tiny girl grinned from ear to ear, never realizing that Hans didn't mean it literally. He was speaking of love as an expanding force. If you can give and accept love, you're as powerful as any giant. Size means nothing. Thematically, this is the kind of stuff movies are made of. "Who knows?" I thought to myself. "Someday, I may be able to use it."

Born of a flower, Thumbelina is wished into existence by a loving mother.

Jacquimo, the romantic swallow, tells Thumbelina she must always follow her heart

Our last three films, *All Dogs go to Heaven*, *Rock-A-doodle*, and *Troll*, all told the stories of boy heroes, so it was high time we shifted the spotlight over to the girls. Since *Troll* was nearly in the can, I was once again searching for the studios next project. It was at this juncture that I remembered the charming scene from Danny Kaye's movie. "Perfect", I thought. Now if we can only tell a girl's story without alienating the boys. That, I knew, was no small task. But the good news was that the staff was jazzed about doing a fairy tale, and so were Gary and I. And, the big plus, of course, was the man himself, Hans Christian Andersen. His stories always tug at the heart, and although most of them are about people's deepest, darkest fears, and seldom, if ever, get to a "happily ever after", ending, Thumbelina seemed to be the exception. And so the challenge of translating this literary masterpiece into an animated motion picture began.

The Budget

Before beginning a new production, I sometimes get this uneasy feeling. Two questions always come up. One, how much money is in the company bank account, two, in designing the picture, should we pull out all the stops, or hold back. The Dublin studio was showing signs of financial stress due to the disappointing box office returns of Rock-A-doodle and Troll. The budget would be set at $23,000,000.00, but down the road, because of delays in cash flows, the work would move more slowly throughout the plant, pushing the final figure to $28,000,000.00. It is not good to go over budget. For all you aspiring filmmakers, those words should be committed to memory, or at least, tattooed on your forehead. If you want to develop a rapport with the money people and have them trust you, you must commit to a figure and stick to it. Even if the faiths smile upon you, and you achieve a great box office return, it is good to have the reputation of being cautious.

Over the years, Gary and I have come up with our own methods of keeping the production train on track. It's a simple system. Plan the flow of the work in footage and cost per week. Be realistic in your estimates. Then, as the scenes move from the animator's desk throughout the other departments, DO NOT FALL BEHIND! It sounds so easy, but the trip-up happens when the animator gets a difficult scene and it takes him longer to finish it than he had planned. For example, let's say his scene is ten feet long, and he delays it's finish by a week, the next department, the in-betweener, will also be delayed by a week; and so on throughout the plant. We call this slip up, a bubble in the system. If you get too many of these, your budget will go through the ceiling. Good luck!

THE COLORS OF *THUMBELINA*

Thumbelina's mother reads a story to her daughter about the Fairy Prince and his enchanted world.

Thumbelina is thrilled that the characters of the story are the same size as herself.

In Ma Toads traveling show, Thumbelina is a misfit. Ma Toads son, Grendel, wants to marry her.

But so does Mr. Mole. If he has his way, Thumbelina will never see sunlight again.

While the king and queen of the fairies are out golding the leaves, their son, Cornelius disappears.

Thumbelina meets Cornelius. He asks for her hand in marriage and wants her to meet his parents.

Thumbelina dreams that one day her Prince will find her. Jacquimo tells her it will happen.

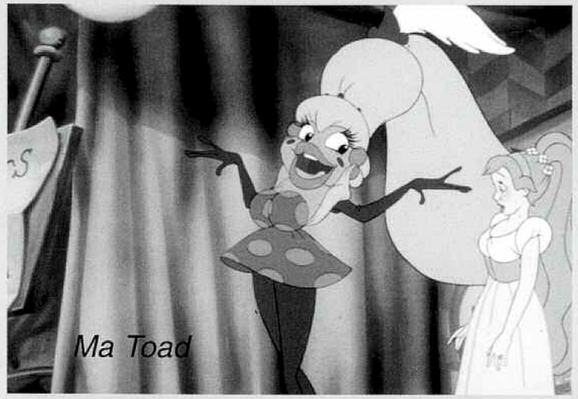
In the tunnels of Mr. Mole, Thumbelina finds Jacquimo, her mentor, mortally wounded.

Before the arrangements can be made, Thumbelina is kidnapped. She escapes, then hunts for her Prince.

The Beetle finds Thumbelina attractive. He leads her astray. She becomes hopelessly lost

Just when it appears that all is lost, Cornelius finds his love and saves her from the clutches of the mole.

Thumbelina marries the Fairy Prince, and is given her own magical wings.


Ma Toad

Charo

Writing is Rewriting

The writers, who having been touched by the muses, have put pen to paper to produce those wonderful screen stories, stories that have carried us all over the moon and beyond the stars. Truly, they are an elite group. Now, if you're saying, you can't buy your way into this club, and no, you can't scholar your way in, even if you study the craft with all its cunning rules, the difficult skill may still elude you. When writers like, Frank Capra, *It's a Wonderful Life*, Robert Town, *China Town*, *Greystokes*, and *Two Jakes*, or Alan Ball, *Six Feet Under*, speak in movie language, something inside us stands to attention. I read somewhere that the best books tell you what you already know. Everyone starts out trying to make a great movie. The first hoop you must jump through is a killer, i.e., the script. John Pomeroy and myself began searching for one of "the gifted" in Los Angeles. In 1990, we met with a dynamic women named Carol Lynn Pearson. She arrived with impressive credentials and a list of past successes, a truly amazing resume. The story, *Thumbelina*, was to be a classic, and we all felt strongly that it should be told from a women's point of view. As the three of us sat in my hotel room, the excitement for the Hans Christian Andersen story became apparent. The theme of the story was the same as *The Ugly Duckling*. The question the story posed was obvious, could this runt of a girl, only three inches tall, make a significant difference in today's mad, mad, world? And of course, could Ms. Pearson write it in an entertaining way. The character arch is always the most difficult part of the puzzle. If the protagonist is too flawed i.e. selfish, mean spirited, or just too naive, the audience would not like him/her at all. On the other hand, perfect would be boring. So, like all the creative arts, it's about how much of this stuff and how much of that.

Cutting right to the chase, when Ms. Pearson submitted the first draft on *Thumbelina*, it was cleverly written, but the tiny girl came across as confident, high spirited and independent, a veritable role model for a 90's woman. I re-read the draft several times, hunting for the character's, "dramatic need". It wasn't there. In Hans Christian Andersen's story, he alluded frequently to the idea that *Thumbelina* was one of a kind. There was no one like her. She felt freakish, friendless, lonely, and her dramatic need was to overcome all that. We had missed the target. In our enthusiasm to create a strong female role model, we had overshot the mark, and the Prince in the story was spineless, weak, and hardly worth marrying.

In the coming weeks, we did rewrite upon rewrite, hoping to capture the spirit of the original story. It finally makes sense that like, *E.T.*, she must live with beings like herself. The movie then centers around her search for the kingdom of the tiny fairies, and the Fairy Prince.

Of course, the studios schedule and budget pushed us into production prematurely, but all in all, the outcome was gratifying, or at least the Hans Christian Andersen Society in Denmark thought so. We were invited to Copenhagen to celebrate the film, which for them was "simply marvelous."

Barry Manilow

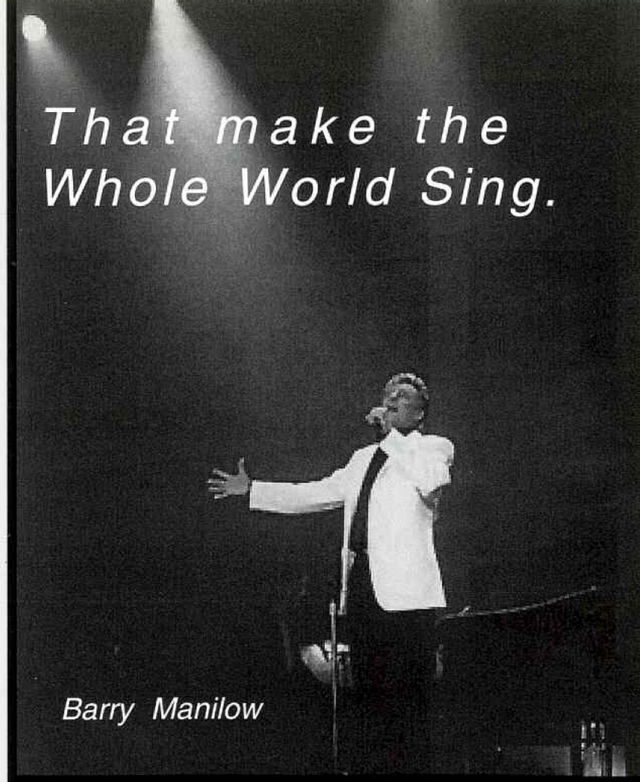
I Write the Songs

By far, the highlight of producing *Thumbelina* was working with Barry Manilow. The passion with which Barry approached his compositions was what really knocked me out.

He also was salivating to write the score. With his flare for strong melody, who could object? "Yes, yes, yes, do it all," I responded. "In fact if you're feeling frisky about your drawing talent, why not grab a pencil, and join us in Dublin?" Barry laughed. " I will," he said. "Give me about twenty years to tune up my drawing skills."

Barry is constantly mother-henning his works, looking for ways to improve them. Only once in the two-year production period did I see him nail the recording of a song in one take.

The talent was Barbara Cook. In 1957 she was Broadway's darling, creating the role of Marion, the librarian, in Meredith Wilson's acclaimed, *The Music Man*. It was Barry's idea to cast Ms. Cook as Thumbelina's mother, the sweetheart whose loneliness drives her into wishing Thumbelina into existence. Barry and his lyricist, Bruce Sussman, fashioned a melancholy tune, one that would test the pipes of the retired Ms. Cook, and validate their conviction that she was still a musical force to be reckoned with. So in 1992, she left New York, flew to Los Angeles, and we all met with great expectations at B&B Sound Studios in Burbank for the musical challenge. Everyone chatted and gushed over the famous Diva for about thirty minutes. Finally, Barry suggested we rehearse the song, "I think I've got it," she said softly, "why don't you just roll the tape." "Sure," returned Barry. Barbara Cook smiled, then nodded, and closed her eyes. The pre-recorded orchestra began playing in her headset. Oh my, what happened then was magic, pure magic. The sound poof walls at B&B recording stage have heard, I'm sure, miraculous talents over the years, but that morning, when Barbara Cook sang *Soon*, that was something they have never heard nor felt before. And those nervous nail biters in the control booth, those perfectionists seeking after a flaw, sat very still indeed as the tears rolled down their cheeks. And when Ms. Cook sang the final note, a high C, on the most difficult vowel of all, the oo of the word "soon", that laid the people in the booth on the floor; Barry stared at the ceiling, "perfect, its perfect."



Barry Manilow

Barbara Cook

"It's Perfect"

VOICES

Which comes first, the voice or the animation? This question always comes up. The simple answer is, the voice. But why? Perhaps the answers lie in something Walt once said, "…The real thing behind this is, we are in the motion picture business, only we are drawing the characters instead of photographing them." I take this to mean theatre and all the rules that apply to theatre. There is something magical that happens when two actors play a scene together, something born of the body, mind, and the spirit, something that cannot be drummed up by logic, something serendipitous that is already endowed with wit, charm, and insight. Actors spend mountains of time trying to find the characters of the roles they play. They call on experience, they research, and they interview people. We all get that acting is only pretending, but a good actor makes it seem real, even though it is an illusion. The voice of a person speaks volumes about who they are. Below I've listed the main cast with a single objective describing their voice.

Thumbelina	Jodi Benson	Innocence.
Jacquimo	Gino Conforti	Romance.
Prince Cornelius	Gary Imhoff	Virtue.
Ma Toad	Charo	Seduction.
Mr. Mole	John Hurt	Gluttony.
Miss Field mouse	Carol Channing	Cunning.
The Beetle	Gilbert Gottfried	Deceit.
The Mother	Barbara Cook	Purity.

Recording each of the talents on this movie was an unforgettable experience, but if I were pushed to choose one that gave me goose bumps, it would be John Hurt. He lived in Ireland at the time. We met at Windmill Lane Studios to record his voice. John is a soft-spoken man, with a serene countenance. Before the session began, I tried to impose some of my own ideas for Mr. Mole's voice. He thanked me graciously, and said, "I can hear a voice in my head, let me get that out first."

Mr. Mole is a stingy, gluttonous fellow. I had high hopes for a thin, scrooge-like croak of a sound. I waited. When he delivered the lines, they hinted at a businessman, a merchant, a golden-tongued negotiator, an opportunist and a dark lecherous fellow. It was fabulous. I leaned back in my chair thinking, "Never in a million years would the animators have added so much depth to the part, and that is why the actors go first. God bless the actors, they give vision to the animators."

DESIGNS

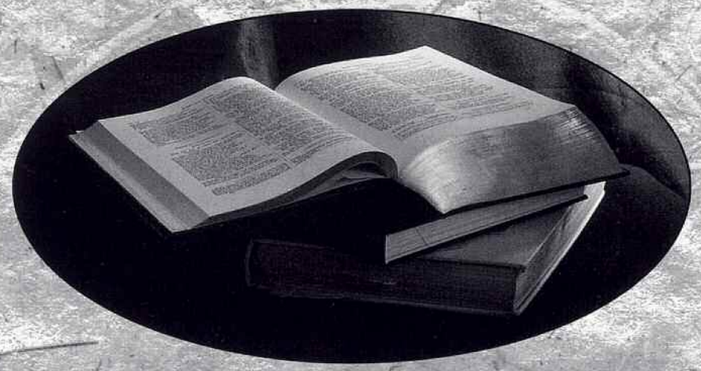
Usually, it's me who controls the character design on the picture. I've done it for years, and with some degree of success. But just for the sake of art and its demand for freshness and variety, I turned the controls on Thumbelina over to a fabulous creator named Roland Wilson, then stepped back to give him room.

Every so often, a person walks into my life that is a dead ringer for Santa Clause. Roland is such a person. He is tall, comfortably plump, with an infectious smile, and sparkling eyes. His cheeks are naturally rosy, and his voice is soft and melodious, like the deep sound of a bass clarinet. And, Mrs. Clause… I mean Roland's wife, Suzanne Wilson, an artist of awesome talent herself, is his soul mate. She is tastefully glamorous at thirty-five, with soft auburn hair, and kind reassuring eyes.

On *Thumbelina*, the pair of them were forever in a "show–and-tell" mode, always welcoming suggestions from the staff. The look of the characters designs were very personal for Roland. If you engaged him in conversation about one of them, he would hand you reams of notes about the soul of his creation. Jacquimo, for example, is a bird, a swallow, and a mentor to Thumbelina. But to Santa, (Roland) he was much more. Roland could tell you his back-story, and his every thought before the little bird hatched from the egg. He even knew of Jacquimo's parents, parents that were raised in the South of France near a town called Penn, where thirty-seven newspapers are published daily: A town which influenced young Jacquimo as a fledgling, instilling in his heart, both optimism and hope. Even the harlequin costume he wears testifies to his theatrical nature. And, being French, Jacquimo speaks fluently the language of love, which explains why he encourages Thumbelina to search for the Fairy Prince, against the apparent evidence that the Fairy Kingdom is only a myth. Ronan's character designs are more than mere graphic creations. They are fashioned with the same tender loving care that the toy maker, Geppetto, demonstrated when he created his son, Pinocchio.

Roland and Suzanne have since relocated at Disney Studios in Burbank, but every Christmas when I think of Mr. and Mrs. Claus packing that famous sleigh, I also think of Roland and Suzanne.
Congrats to the Wilson's, and Merry Christmas!

The MANUSCRIPT



THE MANUSCRIPT

It is afternoon. Willow is finally in a calmer state of mind after his run in with the students in the commissary, and the business of teaching Nuala is finally back on track.

NUALA

I have a question. I've been pondering it for a long time, and this is probably the wrong moment to ask it, but please indulge me.

WILLOW

How can there be a wrong moment? Do ask it.

NUALA

Well, some stories just seem perfect for the medium, but others...others cry out to be shot in live action. Why is that?

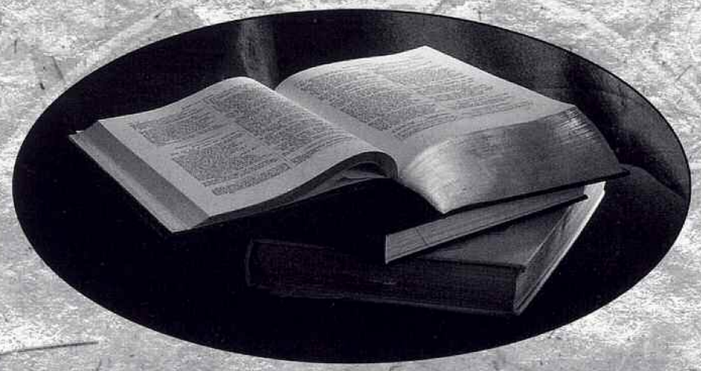
MECHAR

Very astute observation. The true answer probably lies buried deep in the human psyche.
Live films portray real people. What we see on the screen is a mirror of our own real world.

WILLOW

And in our world, there are limits. For example people can't fly.

The MANUSCRIPT



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MECHAR

On the other hand, it is an alien world, born out of sheer fantasy. The audience sees visions unknown to them, unless of course, the producer is merely copying conventions from a previously animated film.

NUALA

So you think animation producers have to boldly explore the frontiers of dream fantasies?

WILLOW

Yes, yes, yes and double yes.

MECHAR

There is one more difference, and it's a big one.

WILLOW

You're going to mess this up.

MECHAR

Be still. We're talking about magic here, perhaps today is the day the muses will smile upon us, and even you may learn something.

WILLOW

(Sarcastically) I am unworthy.

MECHAR

Hush! Where was I? Oh yes, the big difference. Actors are living beings, created by God. They <u>are</u> life!

WILLOW

And...

MECHAR

...And animation drawings are <u>not</u> life. They are representations of life, and therefore can only try to give an illusion of being alive.

WILLOW

And if the animator misses the mark, yuck!!

MECHAR

...Yuck! Indeed, if your drawn characters do not stimulate feelings from the audience, you can kiss your story goodbye.

WILLOW

And the Box Office!

Mechar takes a deep breath and leans forward.

MECHAR

Now, to the meat of your question. What criteria should you use to select a story for an animated movie? Simply put,
1. Find a story the live action camera cannot depict.
2. Create characters that live in a fantasy world.
3. Find dream fantasy environments never before seen by your audience.

WILLOW

And yet, all this has to be conjured from things we experience every day or it will not resonate with the audience.

MECHAR

We study the actual, not so we may be able to accomplish the actual, but so that we may have a basis upon which to go into the fantastic, the unreal, and the imaginative.

WILLOW

That will teach you. Ask a simple question, you get a pageant.

NUALA

Oh, I appreciate your patience. I really do.

WILLOW

Then with renewed enthusiasm, let us return to our discussion of the animation principles.

MECHAR

Where did we leave off?

WILLOW

Stand back and be amazed. We had touched upon:
One: SQUASH and STRETCH,
Two: ANTICIPATION, prelude to comedy, and
Three: STRAIGHT AHEAD animation versus POSE to POSE.
And, with blissful exuberance we were about to embark upon a discussion of four, OVERLAPPING ACTION.

MECHAR

Truly, truly, you are fabulous. Whatever will I do when you are gone?

WILLOW

Do without I suppose.

NUALA

Gone? Are you leaving?

WILLOW

The only leave I'm taking is of my senses for working with this old goat.

Both STARE at each other, agitated.

MECHAR

Overlap?

WILLOW

Overlap.

MECHAR

Now, when a character completes an action and comes to a complete stop, that is, all his appendages stop at the same time, ears, hands, head, feet, tail, everything, the result will be a still, very unnatural look.

WILLOW

Things don't come to a stop all at once. Some parts of a character stop while other parts keep moving.

MECHAR

Think of it as a symphony of movements. Each separate piece independent, but harmonizing with the whole.

WILLOW

The orchestra is a group of individual instruments, but each is played to create a bigger, more magnificent whole. The violin plays a melody. It stops, and holds the final note, while the flute and oboe continue to play before coming to rest in the same chord with the violin.

MECHAR

There are five main categories of Overlap.

1. All those floppy, lifeless appendages like hair, a coat, ribbons, a tail, etc., that continue to move after the characters body has stopped.

WILLOW

2. The body itself is flexible. It stretches, twists, turns, and contracts and catches up. The arms could arrive after the feet. The body itself could arrive at a stop position, then continue beyond it, before settling back into the stop position.

MECHAR

3. The loose flesh on a character's body will trail slower behind its faster moving skeleton.

WILLOW

This idea makes the character feel solid, creating a believable illusion of life. I call it, <u>the trailing flesh</u>.

MECHAR

Four...

WILLOW

Will you slow down and take a breath. Whatever you do, keep breathing.

Mechar inhales then...

MECHAR

4. Often... times... the entertainment... is... not in the action itself, but in what the character does...

Mechar inhales,

MECHAR

After the action is complete.

WILLOW

You see Nuala, every gag has a punch line. How a character reacts to his own action is often more revealing of his personality, and more entertaining.

MECHAR

And finally,

5. The moving hold. When a character comes to a stop, even though the pose is strong there is a limit to the number of frames you can hold it before it loses life, so...

WILLOW

So, if you want that pose seen by the audience, and the illusion of life maintained, hold the drawing, but keep it moving, even if ever so slightly. And now, I'm exhausted.

MECHAR

You look fine to me!

WILLOW

You should never judge a book by it's cover: And it's a lucky thing for you we don't.

MECHAR

Oh my, someone forgot to take their happy pills.

NUALA

I think you are both wonderful. And next time we meet, I shall bring each of you a surprise.

BOTH

A surprise?!

WILLOW

Oh, I love surprises. What is it?

NUALA

I can't tell you, but you will have loads of fun anticipating it.

MECHAR

Well, if he doesn't, I will. But Willow here, poor thing, is too weak to go on. So for today, I suppose that is a wrap.

WILLOW

A wrap, because Willow, poor thing, is too weak?! Oh no you don't! You're not going to blame me for defaulting on Nuala's education. Next principle, number five, SLOW IN, SLOW OUT.

MECHAR

I simply adore this principle. Listen carefully. Once you have labored over your extremes, getting the poses and attitudes just right, you surely hope the audience will see them long enough to appreciate them.

WILLOW

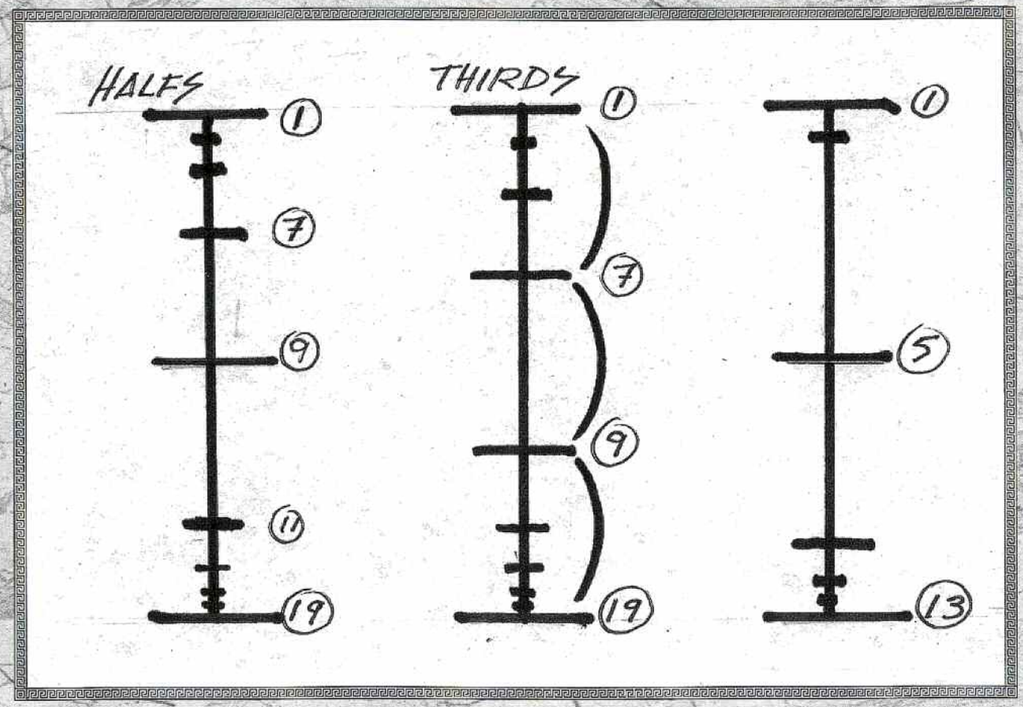
Here, here! Twenty-four frames per second, that's how fast those drawings go zipping by.

MECHAR

So when you time your scene, keep most of the in-betweens close to either one extreme or the next. This also gives the action a crisp stacatto feeling, abounding with energy.

WILLOW

The timing charts will look something like this:



MECHAR

Of course, you must keep overlapping action in mind. Even though you slow into a pose, and immediately slow out of it, heading for the next pose, all the trailing action appendages will arrive later, and leave later. Maybe, if you're real smart, you can put them on their own timing charts.

WILLOW

Thanks, but no thanks. I have my own system! Once the scene is fully in-betweened, I do a pass working straight ahead, adding the overlapping parts.

MECHAR
Always remember one thing. Animation is not a mechanical process. You must always analyze your action and your acting to know how the body works. That's the only way to get the true caricature of realism.

WILLOW
Here, here! Well said Walrus. Your work must be based upon fact in order to achieve sincerity and...

MECHAR
Furthermore...

WILLOW
I'm not finished. The most hilarious comedy is based on actual reality.

MECHAR
Furthermore...

WILLOW
Yes? We are waiting with baited breath!

MECHAR
Furthermore...It is ridiculous to think...

Mechar STOPS mid sentence and SCOWLS.

MECHAR
I've forgotten what I was about to say.

WILLOW
How depressing. Shall we wait, or toddle on ahead hoping you will catch up later.

NUALA
Oh, by all means, let's wait.

WILLOW
Sweet child, the moon will rise and set before he remembers...

Mechar's face suddenly BRIGHTENS UP and he SPEAKS.

MECHAR
Please forgive me. Now I remember what I was going to say. It is ridiculous to think we can build Rome in one day. I suggest we adjourn.

WILLOW
Yes, Mechar, poor thing is out of gas. That's a wrap.

MECHAR
Poor Thing?!

WILLOW
Yes, poor thing, you look haggard and exhausted.

MECHAR
You are mistaken. You have deemed my expressions of modified apprehension to be fatigue.

NUALA
It is I who is running breathless keeping up with you two mental giants.

MECHAR
You are a lady.

WILLOW
I am merely expressing concern for your well being.

MECHAR
And I, for Nuala's. Animation is a difficult discipline to master.

NUALA
Oh, that is so sweet, but you must not worry about me. I am thrilled about what you have taught me, and I will make you proud.

Both men LEAN back and GRIN.

NUALA
I think you will like the surprise.

BOTH
We can hardly wait.

DRAGON'S LAIR

DIRK HAS ENCOUNTERED A BELLIGERENT VIKING WOMAN ON A SUSPENDED BRIDGE SHE SWINGS HER SWORD AT HIM AND...

BAD MOVE

BUT TO HIS SURPRISE, WHEN HE TURNS TO FACE HER, SHE IS GONE!!!

DIRK CONTINUES ON HIS WAY UNTIL HE FINDS HIMSELF IN A STRANGE PLACE, CALLED, THE FOREST OF DESPAIR. THE WINDS MOAN THROUGH THE HOLLOW TREE TRUNKS, AND A SOUPY FOG OBSCURES HIS VISION. SUDDENLY, A SOUND UP AHEAD BRINGS HIM TO A SHARP HALT.

DIRK PEEKS HIS HEAD UP TO SEE A FAT...

...WART HOG, SUFFOCATING IN THE CONSTRICTING COILS OF..

..A MIGHTY STRIPED SERPENT!!!

OW, OW, OW. STOP, STOP!

AND SO, HOW DOES DIRK REACT TO THIS GRUESOME SCENE?? DOES HE HELP THE POOR INSIGNIFICANT WARTHOG?? ...NO!! HE...

SIMPLY SHAKES HIS HEAD SADLY, THEN TURNS, AND WALKS AWAY.

THEN, BLAM! THE WARTHOG AND SNAKE COILS HIT DIRK'S BACKSIDE, KNOCKING HIM TO THE GROUND...

I'M DYING HERE PAL, COULD YOU HELP ME?

KEEP OUT OF THIS BOY, DON'T BE sssSTUPID !!!

STUPID??

NO,NO,NO,NO, NOT MY LEG ! NO DON'T...DON'T!!

WHAP

STUPID?! WATCH WHO YOU'RE CALLING STUPID.

AAAHEEE..

THE SNAKE THROWS A COIL AROUND DIRKS NECK AND SQUEEZES.

MISsSTAKE... SO NOW I HAVE TWO SUCCULENT MORSELSSSS.

YOU'RE NOT HELPING,YOU'RE MAK...MAKING IT...(GAK)...IT WORSE ! ! ! (GAK)

WIDER GOES THE SNAKES MOUTH, THEN...

CHOMP !!! IT SHUTS.

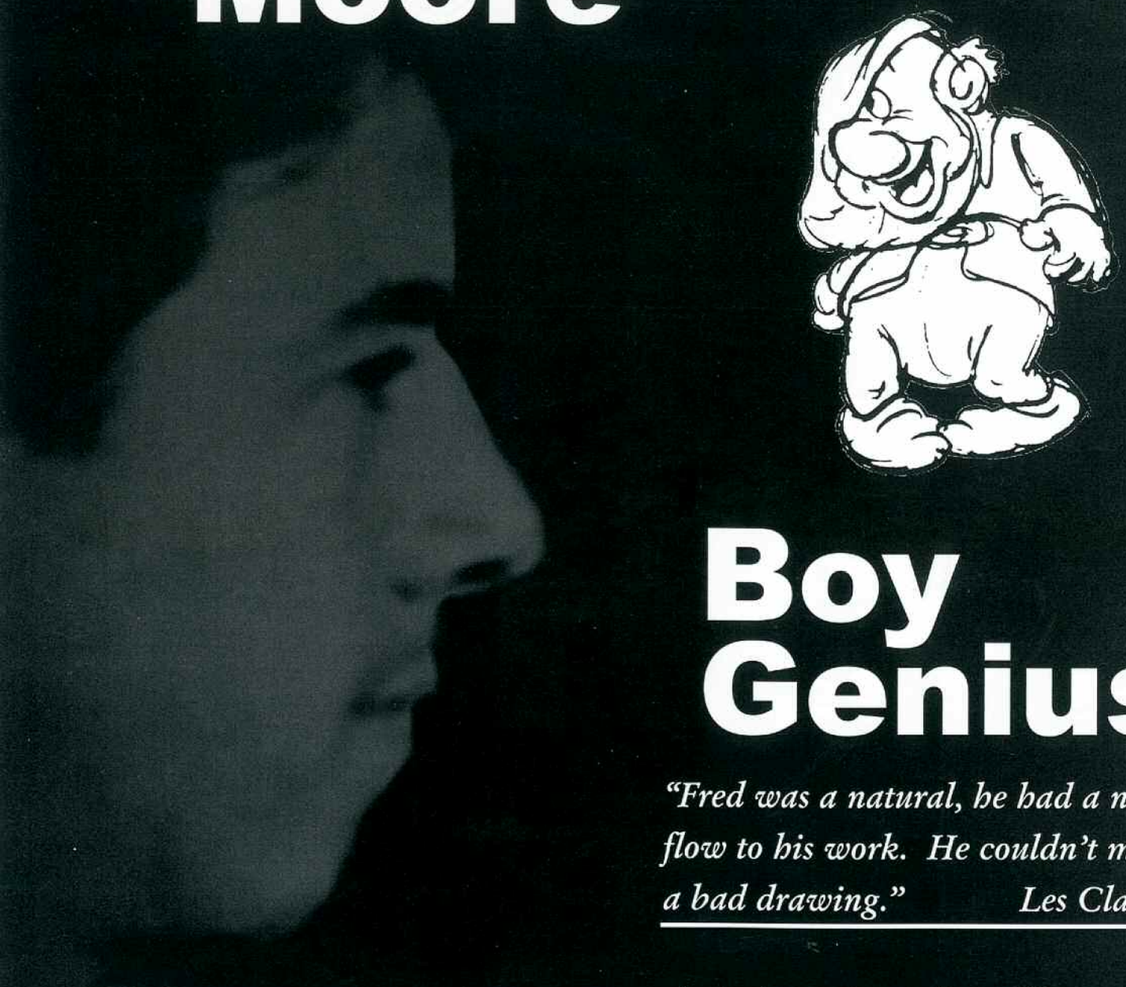
CRUNCH !

THE SNAKE TOOK DIRK'S BITE PERSONALLY, AND TURNED HIS FURY ON THE YOUTH.

BUT DIRK WAS DETERMINED NOT TO BE INSULTED !!

TO BE CONTINUED

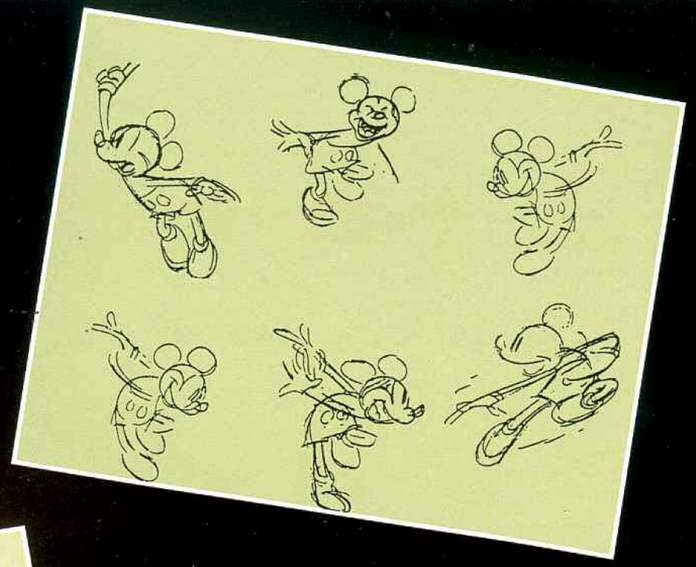
Freddy Moore

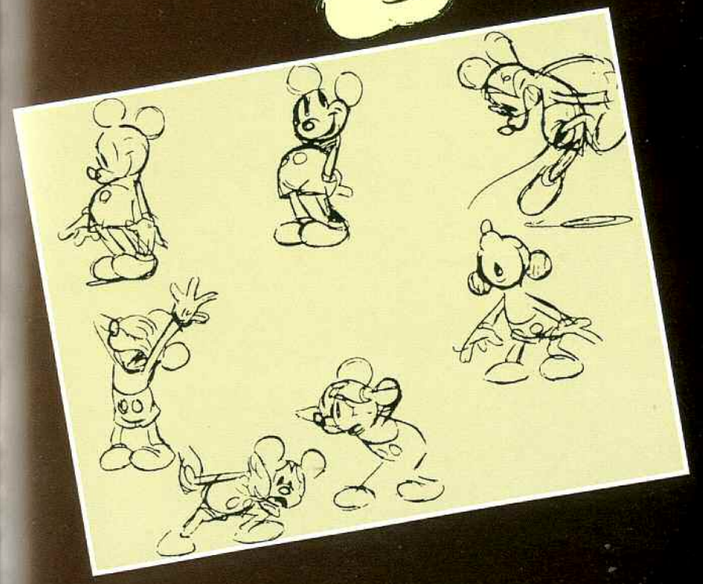


Boy Genius

"Fred was a natural, he had a natural flow to his work. He couldn't make a bad drawing." *Les Clark.*

Some day, I hope to meet Freddy Moore. Of course, it will not be in this life, he's already passed over. But, I think it could be in the crowded hall of eternity, or maybe on some astral plain of another existence, or if the reincarnationists are right, we could meet as two Moose in a grassy meadow in Calgary, Canada. How it comes about, I don,t care, as long as it does. "I'm curious," I would say to him. "My, but aren't you a clever fellow. Tell me sir, who taught you how to draw. What unseen hand guided your hand across the paper, leaving in its wake, those fabulous characters that turned us all green with envy?" Then the Moore moose would probably raise his head and say, "If I have to explain it, you'll never get it. Anyway, it's in the past: I'm a moose now." "Please, I'm begging you. I want to know what it was like to have natural talent." As my mind cogitates on this outlandish fantasy, my fingers turn the pages of Frank and Ollie's book *ILLUSION*



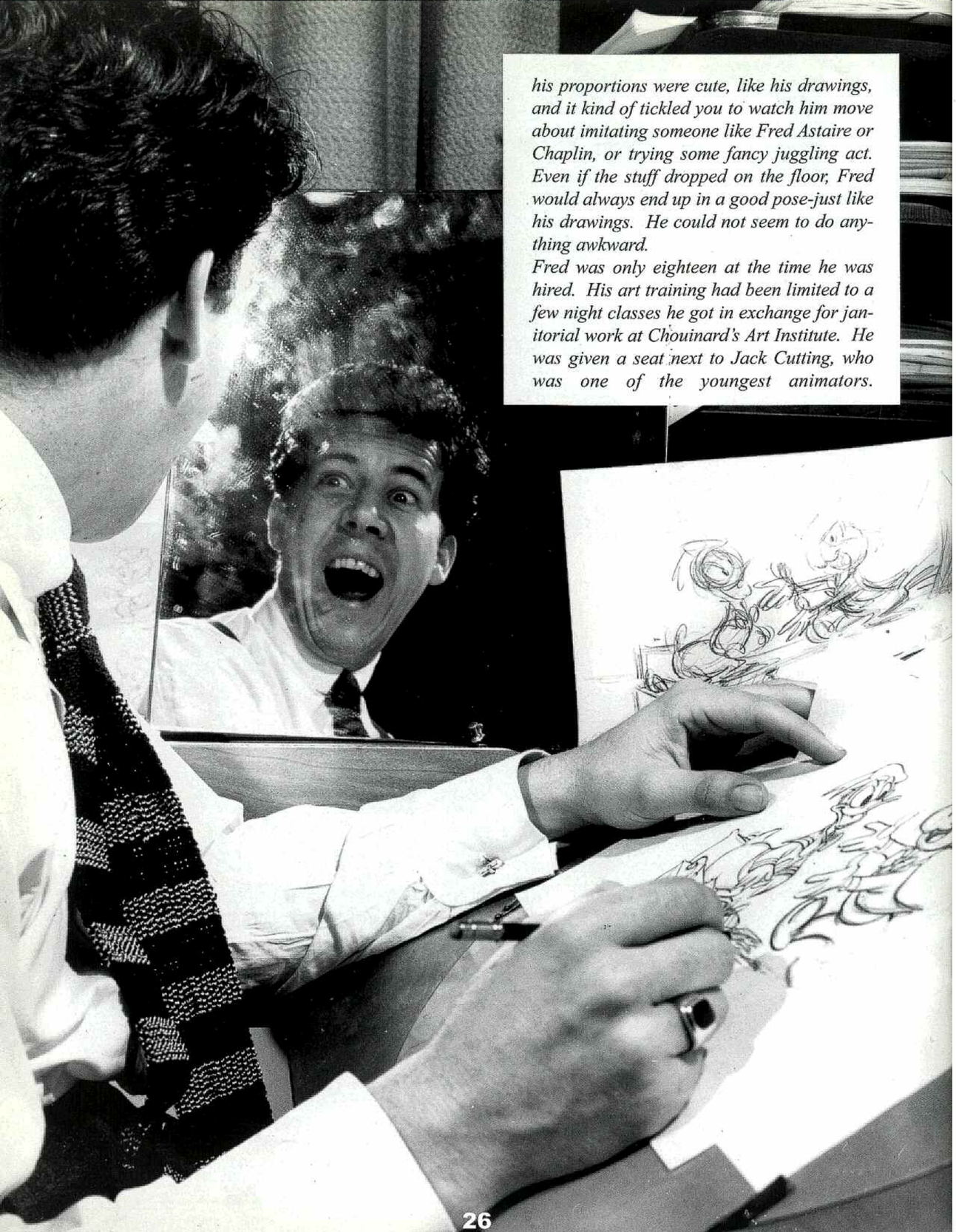


OF LIFE. They are on page 119, I read: *Fred Moore never did get to be a big guy, and when he was young, he was much smaller than his brothers.*

This is promising. It sounds like this profile might shed some light on Fred's character. I read on:

They would all play baseball together, and, of course, they always made Fred play in the out field, and never gave him a chance at bat. Finally, his mother made the brothers let the little guy bat. But the first ball went over his head, and the second one came along the ground; each time they would yell, "Strike!" The third pitch was thrown behind him. "Strike Three, you're out!" Fred would get so mad, he would eat dirt. However, his brothers did not know what they were missing, because Fred really was a good athlete. Ten years later, when Fred was at Disney Studios, he was known as "the most coordinated guy in the studio." According to Wilfred Jackson, "He used to do all those gymnastics. Fred could knock the ball clear out of the field where we were playing." But he took a lot of kidding about his size. Ham Luske, was just enough bigger than Fred to call him "squirt." He liked to get Fred to stand back-to-back with him so they could measure. Even when Fred wore his thickest shoes, he was still looking up at the other fellows.

He really was a funny little guy, but it was not that he was trying to be funny. It was just that



his proportions were cute, like his drawings, and it kind of tickled you to watch him move about imitating someone like Fred Astaire or Chaplin, or trying some fancy juggling act. Even if the stuff dropped on the floor, Fred would always end up in a good pose-just like his drawings. He could not seem to do anything awkward.

Fred was only eighteen at the time he was hired. His art training had been limited to a few night classes he got in exchange for janitorial work at Chouinard's Art Institute. He was given a seat next to Jack Cutting, who was one of the youngest animators.

"At times, Fred felt that a different pencil would give him a new slant on things. When he could not draw what he wanted, he was inclined to suspect the paper, the color of the lead, or the weight of the pencil." Frank Thomas.

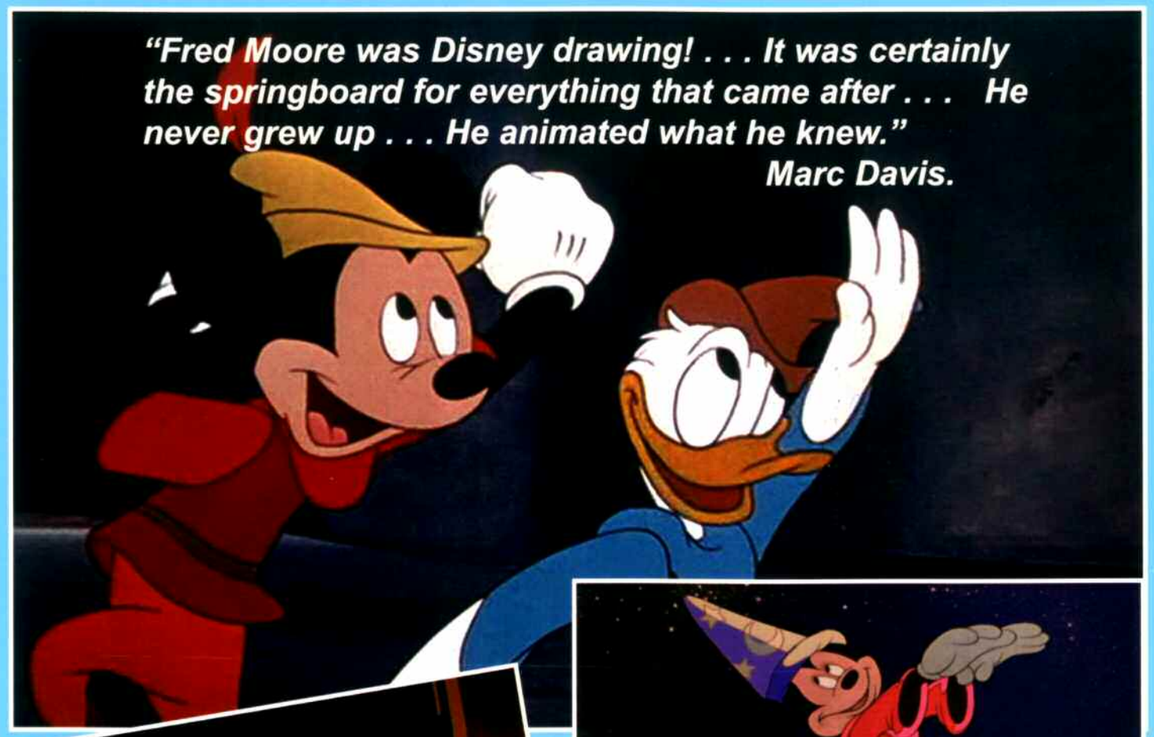
Jack said, "Fred would sit there with his arms folded for a minute, then start drawing. He hadn't been there more than 24 hours, and he was making these great drawings. I couldn't believe it. By the end of a couple of days, he was starting to animate something. Everything came easy to him."

"Yes, Fred was just right for the time," Ward Kimball says. He was the first to escape from the mold of the rubber hose, round circle school. He began getting counter movements, counter thrusts, in the way he drew. He decided to make Mickey's cheeks move with his mouth, which they had never done before because you drew everything inside the circle. He squashed and stretched more and was right at the time, but Fred was a high-school trained animator...and he more or less emerged drawing that way. Nobody seemed to remember any development. The rest of us came into this place-it was a strange place-we adapted to it, and we kept trying to improve and change, and we became students of it. Fred never thought of that, he wasn't a student of animation, he was just a natural, gifted animator, who's style and development was perfect, timing-wise, for that point in time.

Even the old hand Mickey experts, such as Les Clark were amazed at what Fred could do. "Fred was a natural. He had a natural flow to his work. He couldn't make a bad drawing, really." This was because Fred was an intuitive draftsman, and it is questionable whether more formal art training would have advanced him. He just was not as oriented to classrooms and lectures as some of the men were. He would say, "Don Graham can give you the rule; I just say it looks better."

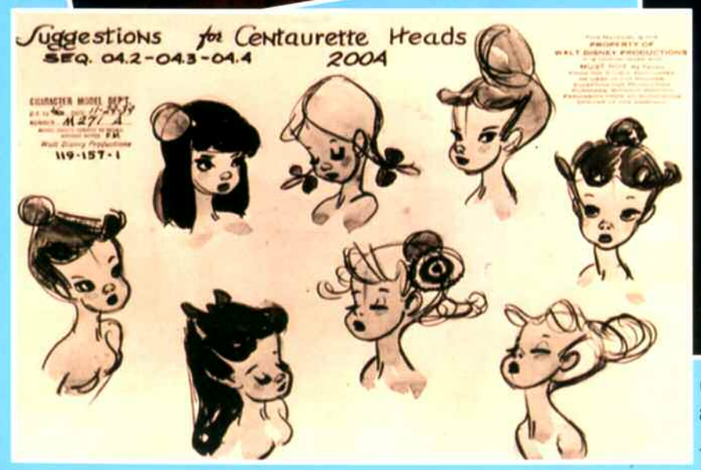
This is probably the biggest thing Fred had going for him: He had the ability to tell when something was better one way than another. It is difficult to recall a "Freddy drawing" that did not have everything in the right place. The arms were always related to the rest of the drawing, and even if he put them where they would not be normally, they still looked right. The head seemed to have the right tilt for the shoulders, and when he stretched something out he could make that look correct too. If Fred drew it, it was pleasing to look at, and it was this pleasing quality that carried his work more than the acting.

The Freddy Moore sketches of girls were coveted by everyone at the studio. For years to come, the innocence of these beauties would affect the look of the Disney heroines.


"Fred Moore was Disney drawing! . . . It was certainly the springboard for everything that came after . . . He never grew up . . . He animated what he knew."
Marc Davis.

Fun and Fancy Free, 1947.

Fantasia, 1940, Mickey in the Sorceror's apprentice. Symbolically, he was Walt's alter ego and studio mascot.



(Left) Fred's appealing model sheet of girls was an inspiration to animators on *(Above) The Pastorale Symphony,Fantasia, 1940.*

The appealing innocence of Freddy Moore's girl drawings can be seen in the designs of the heroines in many of Disney's animated films, like the mermaids from Peter Pan, 1953.

(Left) Slew Foot Sue, the femme fatale from *Pecos Bill*, was animated by Milt Kahl, but Fred's influence can be easily seen. From *Peter Pan*, 1953, (Right) Tinkerbelle resonates with the same appealing design.

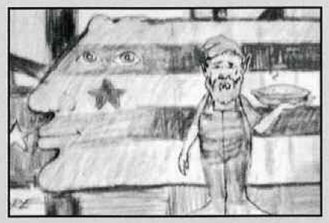
(Below) *Peter Pan* is the story of the boy who never grew up, but the star that stole the show was his side-kick Tinkerbelle. The design was classic Freddy Moore.

Three Caballeros, 1945.

editor's scoop

Pat Roberts presents Don with an award for winning the Iron Artist Contest. This event was a first for Dragon Con, held this year in Atlanta.

When two well-distinguished artists, Don Bluth, and Larry Elmore, lent their support for the recent Dragon Con, Iron Artist competition, in Atlanta, Georgia, they let soar not only their tremendous talent for drawing, but also their ability for defining true artistic style and flair under pressure. Not unlike the Iron Chef show depicted on television, Iron Artist, a new event at Dragon Con also proved to be a hit with the audience. As the show progressed, both artists were given just sixty minutes to complete a work of art, the theme, early Norman Rockwell pastel cubism! While Bluth and Elmore were busy creating their paintings, Masters of Ceremonies, Peter David and Harlan Ellison pumped the crowd with a wild Japanese style comedy act. This event was particularly comical since Bluth and Elmore had no idea what they were supposed to create in the time leading up to the show. When the secret ingredient was unveiled for all to see (a Cube), both Bluth and Elmore scratched their foreheads in idle anticipation, or maybe even inspiration for the task at hand. To say the least, both paintings were very interesting indeed: Don bluth created his own version of the coppertone girl while Larry Elmore worked up an elf-like self portrait illustrating a pie and an American flag. Without sounding too bias (yeah, right!), Larry didn't even come close to winning the gold in this event. To be honest, though, I don't believe Larry was too bothered that the judges picked Bluth's creation as the winner.



Due to circumstances beyond our control, the staff at Don Bluth Films Inc, and Don Bluth's ToonTalk Inc., were forced to cancel the Toronto ToonUp 2001 Animation Seminar scheduled for September 15-16. Everybody that paid for their tickets will receive a full refund, and first option on seats when the event is rescheduled at a later time. The Animation Seminar scheduled for October 27-28 in San Francisco, CA will go forward as planned. There are still some seats available. Call (888)363-8343 for reservations.

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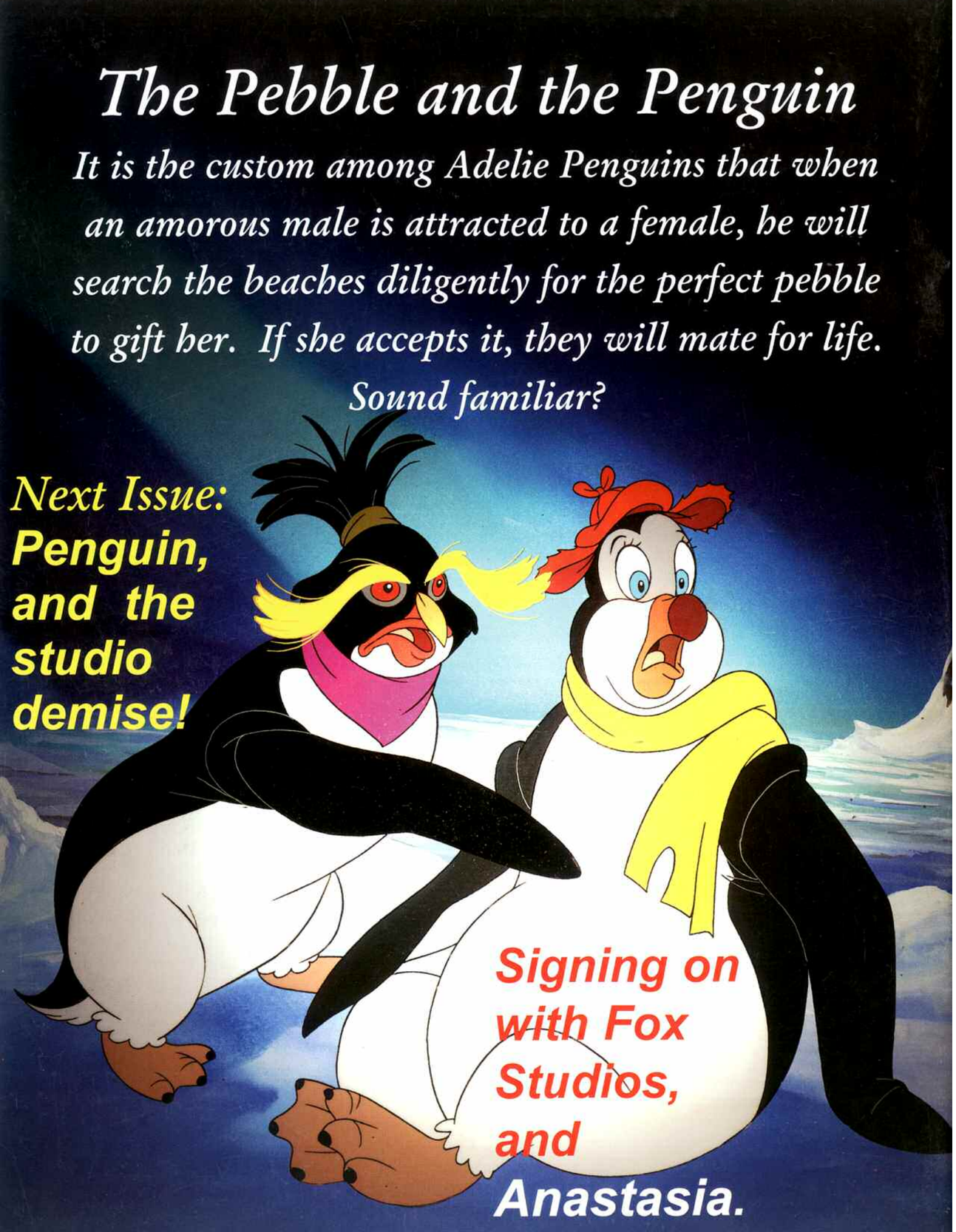
The Pebble and the Penguin

It is the custom among Adelie Penguins that when an amorous male is attracted to a female, he will search the beaches diligently for the perfect pebble to gift her. If she accepts it, they will mate for life. Sound familiar?

Next Issue:
Penguin, and the studio demise!



Signing on with Fox Studios, and Anastasia.